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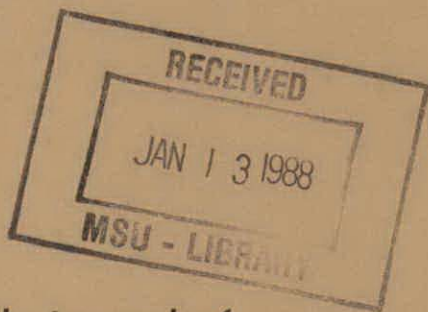
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## **SPEAKER AND GAVEL**

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## **SPEAKER AND GAVEL**

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# THE IMPOTENT STYLE OF RONALD REAGAN: A – E = <GC *REDIVIVA*

Ronald H. Carpenter

Let A equal *actio*—the rhetorical canon of delivery, the effective management of voice and body in oral discourse. Let E equal *elocutio*—the canon of style, the mastery of word choice and word arrangement for functional eloquence. For President Reagan, A minus E equals a less-than-great communicator after all. That was my thesis for an earlier essay in this journal.<sup>1</sup>

For presidential discourse on television, Mr. Reagan's prowess with delivery is perhaps unsurpassed. Only occasional lapses mar his performance, such as disfluencies in some answers and stumbling through the concluding illustration during the first televised debate with Walter Mondale in 1984. For the second debate, though, Ronald Reagan returned to his customary performance levels. Conducing to his admirable *actio* are a well-modulated baritone voice capable of controlled variation between restrained forcefulness and almost hushed whispers, eye contact, meaningful gestures, physical poise, and a superb sense of when to pause for clarity, emphasis, and emotional effect. Yes, some critics might carp about the overuse of that studied nod of the head, with pursed lips, typically to stage right, but Ronald Reagan's acting background and training did not include Stanislavski's "method." For most Americans, as the audience in the theatre of the presidency, that facial gesture constitutes but additional evidence, albeit as paramessage, of ostensible determination. In sum, this president's rhetorical management of *actio* warrants acclaim.

Acclaim is *not* warranted, however, for *elocutio* and style in discourse. Mr. Reagan—along with his writers—avoids those nuances of syntax and lexicon that transform mundane sentences into memorable eloquence. We may recall President Reagan's quip about sending Rambo to solve a problem or his "on-mike" slip about when World War III will start. No lines, though, rank with Abraham Lincoln's schemes of *antistrophe* and *asyndeton* in "government of the people, by the people, for the people;" Franklin Roosevelt's *tradioctio* in "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself;" or John Kennedy's ubiquitous antithesis, "Ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country." Nor has Mr. Reagan found an apt trope as catchphrase to approach the rhetorical success of Roosevelt's "New Deal," Kennedy's "New Frontier," or even Richard Nixon's "Great Silent Majority" (our current president's oft-repeated but tautological "New Beginning" did not catch on, but we were fascinated briefly by his "evil empire" characterization of the Soviets).

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Ronald H. Carpenter is Professor of English at the University of Florida. Portions of this update of his earlier essay were read at the 1985 Speech Communication Association Convention in Denver.

<sup>1</sup> See Ronald H. Carpenter, "Ronald Reagan and the Presidential Imperative to Stylize: A – E = <GC," *Speaker and Gavel* 20 (1982–83): 1–6.

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In Roderick Hart's estimate, "Reagan's language virtually never calls attention to itself," the president's "body, voice, and smile do the necessary emotional embellishing," and "his language is drawn from life as it is lived most simply. . . . Ronald Reagan is no Bryan or Lincoln or Stevenson. He impresses by means of dramatic action, not by means of deftly chosen words. His pleadings find favor because Ronald Reagan himself is attractive." And thus, to Hart, this president is "not the Nation's orator, or a master stylist."<sup>2</sup> Clearly, President Reagan—*sans* eloquent style—has demonstrated communication effectiveness for the nonce. Equally clear is the fact that stylistic prowess does not itself assure greatness as a communicator (too many voters perceived Adlai Stevenson's prowess with words as a paramessage saying "egghead" when a pragmatic "General" Eisenhower promised simply, "I shall go to Korea"). Nevertheless, presidential words can and do endure rhetorically to epitomize exceptionally well what Americans want said well—but they are unable to articulate effectively themselves. Widely published portraits of Franklin Roosevelt and John Kennedy often quote sentences easy enough to select and print as reminders of an essential optimism that should guide our future endeavors; but while Ronald Reagan's nostalgic appeals about our mythic past may be equally appropriate as responses to his rhetorical situation, this president's portrait in years to come could be published with a snip of videotape affixed. His words, for lack of eloquent style, will not endure as morals and maxims for long-term influence upon our attitudes and actions.<sup>3</sup> Thus, because the fleeting visual and auditory stimuli of Mr. Reagan's poise and polish with delivery cannot last in our collective consciousness to guide us, he will be our less-than-great communicator after all.

During his first term, Reagan's style in discourse displayed several tendencies that undermined eloquence. Recall these examples from his First Inaugural as well as his State of the Union addresses in 1982 and 1984: a conversational and stylistically inept *well* or *now* to introduce sentences, as in "Well, I believe we the Americans of today are ready to act" or "Now, I believe there is . . ."; a propensity for idiomatic contractions, such as *we're*, *it's*, and *we'll*; clusters of words without predicates, passing off as sentences, such as "A man of humility who came to greatness reluctantly" or "And then beyond the Reflecting Pool, the dignified columns of the Lincoln Memorial"; and antitheses that do not capitalize on the advantage of recency over primacy to end on the upbeat and emphasize the positive (he prefers "The future is best decided by ballots, not bullets" or "government" that would "work with us not over us; to stand by our side, not ride our back"). Moreover, in stylized parallelisms, Ronald Reagan squanders repetitions upon impotent words, such as contractions, impersonal pronouns, and other language choices devoid of semantic punch (unlike the potent parallelism of

<sup>2</sup> Roderick Hart, *Verbal Style and the Presidency: A Computer-based Analysis* (Orlando: Academic, 1984) 212–37 ("The Great Communicator and Beyond").

<sup>3</sup> See Carpenter, "Presidential Imperative" and Ronald H. Carpenter, "The Symbolic Substance of Style in Presidential Discourse," *Style* 16 (Winter 1982): 38–49.

Winston Churchill's "We shall fight" or Martin Luther King's "I have a dream").<sup>4</sup> And that stylistic impotence characterized his Second Inaugural—wherein presidents no longer seek success at the polls but prominence in posterity. Amplifying upon his proposed "security shield" in space, Mr. Reagan ignores positive if not archetypal connotations of either word: "*It wouldn't kill people, it would destroy weapons. It wouldn't militarize space, it would help demilitarize the arsenals of earth. It would render nuclear weapons obsolete.*" We can learn what is repeated so why teach it to us? And colloquial contractions still abound, as in "we've lighted the world," "there's no story more heartening," and "we've come to a turning point"; and the deletion of *that's* would enhance "we live in a world that's lit by lightning." The president also persists with idiomatic fillers, as in "Now, here is a place for the Federal Government" or "Now, there is another area . . ." But are sounds to accompany nods of the head with pursed lips so important? Consider what is *lost* by saying "Well, with heart and hand, let us stand as one today."

Mr. Reagan's Second Inaugural Address also ignored possibilities for balanced antitheses. Although "past greatness" and "better tomorrow" offer opportunity for sharp apposition, he prefers a diffuse "Voices were raised saying that we had to look to our past greatness and glory. But we, the present-day Americans, are not given to looking backward. In this blessed land, there is always a better tomorrow." Similarly, government as our "servant" rather than our "master" lends itself to an incisive epigram, yet the moral is buried: "But in another sense, our new beginning is a continuation of that beginning created two centuries ago when, for the first time in history, government, the people said, was not our master. It is our servant; its only power that which we, the people, allow it to have." And antitheses still tend to deemphasize by position positive values that more likely should be reaffirmed, as in "We have begun to increase the rewards for work, savings and investment; reduce the increase in the cost and size of government and its interference in people's lives." By reversing the two halves, the line emphasizes the positive; by eliminating "the increase in" from "reduce the increase in the cost," the antithesis is sharper; and for still greater balance and incisiveness, a script doctor might recommend "We have reduced the cost and size of government—and increased the rewards for work, savings, and investment."<sup>5</sup>

An eye or ear for antithesis was also needed for Mr. Reagan's address in May 1985 at Bitburg, Germany, after visiting a military cemetery where forty-

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<sup>4</sup> For other examples of that early stylistic ineptness, see "Presidential Imperative." For this present essay, I quote Mr. Reagan from the following texts: First Inaugural Address, *Vital Speeches* (15 February 1981): 258–60; 1982 State of the Union Address, *Vital Speeches* (15 February 1982): 258–62; 1894 State of the Union Address, *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents* 20 (30 January 1984): 87–94; Second Inaugural Address, *Vital Speeches* (1 February 1985): 226–28; and the Bitburg address, *New York Times* 6 May 1985: A8. In all quotations used in this essay, the italics are mine and are used to emphasize the stylistic factor being considered.

<sup>5</sup> See a more complete discussion of this aspect of stylistic effectiveness in Ronald H. Carpenter, "The Ubiquitous Antithesis: A Functional Source of Style in Presidential Discourse," *Style* 10 (Fall 1976): 426–41.



eight SS troops were buried with two thousand other World War II German troops. Epideictic or occasional addresses are also known as demonstrative oratory, as speakers demonstrate ability to say well what audiences already accept as true. Admittedly, the president had some balanced antitheses in sequence: "We who were bitter adversaries are now the strongest of allies. In the place of fear we have sown trust, and out of the ruins of war has blossomed an enduring peace." Nevertheless, he also opts for imbalance, as in "But we can give meaning to the past by learning its lessons and making a better future" (one verb in the first half is overbalanced by two in the obverse half). And opportunities are simply missed: "crimes and wars of yesterday" calls for opposition with praiseworthy conditions of "today"; "terrors of the past" could be juxtaposed with what is admirable in the "present" or "future;" and three positive values which "began" might follow "on this 40th anniversary of World War II, we mark the day when the hate, the evil, and the obscenities ended." One line in particular calls for epigrammatic quality, after referring to "the veterans and families of American servicemen who still carry the scars and feel the painful losses of that war." What could have been the incisive moral—drawn so well in form to be irrefutable in ideational content—was undermined by an idiomatic interjection: "Some old wounds have been reopened, and this I regret very much, because this should be a time of healing." As the *Rhetorica Ad Herennium* observed about stylistic "reasoning by contraries," a speaker can attain an eloquent line "which, of two opposite statements, uses one so as neatly and directly to prove the other." That antithesis "is not only agreeable to the ear on account of its brief and complete rounding off, but also by means of the contrary statement it also forcibly proves what the speaker needs to prove; and from a statement which is not open to question it draws a thought which is in question, in such a way that the inference cannot be refuted, or can be refuted only with much the greatest difficulty."<sup>6</sup> This is the effect of John Kennedy's "let us never negotiate out of fear, but let us never fear to negotiate." Perhaps Ronald Reagan cannot attain the symmetry and *urbanitas* of Kennedy *nee* Sorenson, but his syntax and lexicon could conform better to desiderata advocated in classical rhetorical theory.

My deference to rhetorical theorists of antiquity is not one of unquestioning acceptance of traditional lore. Rather, classical treatises on style evolved in an oral-aural society wherein rhetoricians attuned their ears to those qualities by which spoken lines attained eloquence to be preserved as written words associated for posterity with individual orators. Moreover, those theorists were pragmatic. Consider Aristotle's observation about *anaphora* or *epanaphora* in these lines from Homer: "Nireus from Syme brought three curved ships; Nireus, son of Aglaia and of Charopus; Nireus, most beautiful of all the Greeks who came to Troy, saving Achilles only." As the *Rhetoric* advises, "if a good many things are said about a person, his name

<sup>6</sup> IV. 18. 25–26. Taking a cue from Kenneth Burke, as well as from commentary on both rhetorical theory and information theory, I have discussed this notion in greater detail in two other articles. See Carpenter, "Symbolic Substance of Style" and Ronald H. Carpenter, "The Stylistic Basis of Burkeian Identification," *Today's Speech* 20 (Winter 1972): 19–23.



will have to be mentioned pretty often; accordingly, if his name is often mentioned, one has the impression that a good deal has been said about him. By the use of this fallacy, Homer, who mentions Nireus only in this single passage, makes him important, and has preserved his memory, though in the rest of the poem he says never a word more about him."<sup>7</sup> Mr. Reagan would preserve for us, through style, an impotent "it is" or worse, "well."

When classical treatises identified sources of eloquence, they also described corresponding deficiencies or faults of style. As the undesirable counterpart of a "grand style," the *Rhetorica Ad Herennium* eschewed "swollen style" wherein "turgid and inflated language" is "more impressive than the theme demands."<sup>8</sup> To Demetrius, impressive or grand style has its corresponding fault in "frigidity" or "that which overshoots its appropriate expression," for "the writer who deals with a trivial subject in weighty language is like a man who pretends to have qualities he does not possess, undeterred by his lack of them, or like a man who boasts about trifles."<sup>9</sup> "Now," "well," and "it" are trifles, but the classical metaphors of "frigid" and "swollen" also apply to this passage from Mr. Reagan's Bitburg address:

Twenty-two years ago, President John F. Kennedy went to the Berlin Wall and proclaimed that he, too, was a Berliner. Today, freedom-loving people around the world must say: I am a Berliner, I am a Jew in a world still threatened by anti-semitism, I am an Afghan, and I am a prisoner of the Gulag, I am a refugee in a crowded boat foundering off the coast of Vietnam, I am Laotian, a Cambodian, a Cuban, and a Miskito Indian in Nicaragua. I, too, am a potential victim of totalitarianism.

John Kennedy's "*Ich bin ein Berliner*" was "forceful or intense style," for the Greeks believed that "length dissolves vehemence, and a more forceful effect is attained where much is said in a few words."<sup>10</sup> Ronald Reagan's counterpart has too many hypothetical referents for "I" (which some people might hear, literally, as "I, Ronald Reagan . . . I, Ronald Reagan . . ."). Instead of "grandeur," the effect is more a boast "about trifles." Perhaps Mr. Reagan prefers "language drawn from life as it is lived most simply," as Roderick Hart suggests, but his eye might wander once in a while to a favorable niche in posterity among eloquent predecessors. With the proven box-office appeal of its star, "Presidential Productions" can hire the best script doctors. Their absence may be due as much to technology as to Mr. Reagan's sense of style (or lack thereof).

As a communicator, Ronald Reagan is the product of Hollywood sound stages and television studios. Both environments are intimate spatially. On film sets, addressees of actors' lines are typically in close physical proximity; for television the impersonal addressee of the camera lens is comfortably close. In *both* physical contexts, voices need never be raised above con-

<sup>7</sup> Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1414a. See also Demetrius, *On Style* 61. From Homer's *Iliad* 2. 671-74, the passage was a favorite of critics and rhetoricians who sought to explicate stylistic effectiveness.

<sup>8</sup> IV. 10, 15.

<sup>9</sup> Demetrius 119 and 165. For the Greeks, "to discuss trivialities in an exalted style" is, in their proverb about rhetorical style in discourse, "beautifying a monkey."

<sup>10</sup> Demetrius 240-42. For additional discussion of how Mr. Reagan forgoes eloquent brevitas in favor of wordiness, see Carpenter, "Presidential Imperative."

trolled, well-modulated decibel levels. On Hollywood sets, boom mikes follow actors everywhere; in television studios or at podiums for televised speeches, directional microphones capture faithfully every nuance of voice. Indeed, sharp increases in vocal volume cause consternation among audio engineers as needles on their dials peak into the red. Thus, technology of the microphone could have constrained and conditioned Mr. Reagan's vocal behavior—with a corresponding undesirable influence upon his style in discourse. Compare Mr. Reagan with that American president he often mentions favorably. Recall Franklin Roosevelt's *auxesis* "To some generations much is given; of other generations much is expected; this generation of Americans has a rendezvous with destiny." As read aloud conversationally with a Reaganesque, moderate volume, the line does not "make it." At Franklin Field in Philadelphia on 27 June 1936, Roosevelt's expression was characterized by a staccato, forceful "to some generations," followed by a still louder, percussive "of other generations," and "this generation of Americans has a rendezvous with destiny" was almost strident in sound. Outdoors, to a large audience, the microphone overheard the stylistic climax complementing Roosevelt's dramatic delivery (of course, FDR could also be superbly conversational for radio, and his "Fireside Chats" characteristically used syntax and lexicon "from life as it is lived most simply," delivered nevertheless with a voice capable of "necessary emotional embellishing"). Our current president, though, does not use lines whose style *demands* vocal intensity other than that which is moderate at most. Whereas Franklin Roosevelt was a master of the microphone, Ronald Reagan is its slave.

The television camera itself contributes similarly to Mr. Reagan's incapability for eloquent style. As a "cool" medium, in Marshall McLuhan's notion, television has spawned a host of suitably subdued, "cool" communicators, and that restraint has been the norm for televised presidential communication for two decades. To complement his control over voice for microphones, Mr. Reagan makes sure that television cameras typically "see" and transmit a superbly poised communicator. For John Kennedy, though, television cameras often would "oversee" oratory played with passion to listeners face-to-face before him. The difference is subtle but salient. Technological paraphernalia of electronic communication—themselves as audience—are impersonal and thereby unworthy of impassioned statements befitting people gathered in expansive settings. And although Mr. Reagan's performance is seen and heard ultimately by a mass public, he plays to and *for* the lens and microphone, which are unmoved by the eloquent lines that audiences accept as their persuasive arguments and slogans, morals and maxims. For an actor-communicator conditioned to the spatial confines of Hollywood sets and intimate television studios, *grandeur does not play well*.

So in his starring role as our national spokesperson, Mr. Reagan is adept, indeed, maybe more than just adept. And he was elected in 1980 in part because his communication prowess was salient when contrasted with Jimmy Carter's communication ineptness.<sup>11</sup> *The causal factor, however, is delivery and how he says things with voice and body, an outward display of poise*

<sup>11</sup> Carpenter, "Presidential Imperative."

and prowess in *actio* to rekindle our elders' fondest memories of a Franklin Roosevelt—and the communication *chic* to warm the heart of younger Yuppies and Yumpies. But without *elocutio* this president can be only our less-than-great communicator after all. For Ronald Reagan, this is the legacy of impotent style.



## JESSE ALEXANDER HELMS: SECULAR PREACHER OF THE RELIGIOUS RIGHT

Robert V. Friedenberg

In the Fall 1985 edition of this journal, C. Scott Baker and Dean Fadely suggest that much of Senator Jesse Alexander Helms's success results from the ways in which he employs the principles of identification. They find that "like most political figures, Helms utilizes the techniques of associative identification. However, he also uses an opposite principle—a rhetoric of identification through dissociation."<sup>1</sup> Moreover, Baker and Fadely suggest that these rhetorical tactics seem to work for Helms, and they attribute much of the success of his last three election campaigns to them. Baker and Fadely are accurate in recognizing the importance of Helms's use of the principles of identification. Further, they are accurate in suggesting that he utilizes dissociation or, as they term it, "a negative form of identification," to a greater degree than do most contemporary political figures.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, their study is a valuable addition to the study of political campaign communication, for it well illustrates a candidate who flies in the face of traditional advice to identify and to succeed through dissociation.

By focusing on a rhetorical tactic or strategy, however, Baker and Fadely limit their examination of Helms's rhetoric and, therefore, do not fully treat the underlying source of Helms's success. Helms's uses of the principles of identification, particularly his willingness to utilize dissociation rhetoric, are manifestations of the underlying sources of his success. The sources of Jesse Helms's success are the senator's unwavering confidence in what he frequently calls the virtue of "America's Judaeo-Christian heritage" and his constant efforts to apply the principles of that heritage to contemporary problems. Helms's willingness to attempt to utilize religious principles to justify public policy provides him the rationale for the exceptionally strong anticommunist stand, the harsh condemnation of liberal philosophy, and the vigorous pro-family positions that Baker and Fadely find in his rhetoric. Importantly, because one does not compromise on fundamental questions of morality, Helms's willingness to attempt to utilize religious principles to justify public policy makes it impossible for him to compromise and hence causes him to make extensive use of disassociative rhetoric.

This study illustrates the centrality of Helms's religious perspective to his speaking by examining his use of religious justifications for public policy positions. The study also examines the Senate speaking of Helms, illustrating how his religious perspective has caused him to use both disassociative

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<sup>1</sup> C. Scott Baker and Dean Fadely, "The 1984 Political Campaign: The Rhetoric of Jesse Helms," *Speaker and Gavel* 23 (Fall 1985): 1.

<sup>2</sup> Baker and Fadely 1.

SPEAKER AND GAVEL, Vol. 24, Nos. 2-4 (1987), 60-68.

rhetoric and disassociative political tactics to a greater degree than virtually any other member of that body. Finally, the study examines Helms's non-Senate speeches, illustrating that Helms's religious perspective manifests itself in political jeremiads that rely heavily on disassociative rhetoric.

### Religious Justifications and Public Policy Positions

Since his first election to the United States Senate in 1972, Jesse Helms has become the principle secular preacher of the religious right. It is not necessarily a coincidence that this period has witnessed the dramatic growth of political activity on the part of Fundamentalist churches. Heirs to the Goldwater conservatism of the 1960s, the more militant conservatives of the 1970s and 1980s, like the Goldwater conservatives who preceded them, are strong supporters of the free enterprise system, strident critics of big government, and ardent anticommunists. Unlike the Goldwater conservatives, the new right of recent years has added a religious and moralistic fervor to political dialogue. In identifying the principle tenets of conservative philosophy, Martin Medhurst has recently pointed to the strong religious strains that have traditionally permeated it.<sup>3</sup> While Medhurst is correct to suggest that those strains have long existed, it has remained for the religious right of recent years to explicitly and repeatedly argue from religious rationales when addressing issue after issue of public concern. The overt introduction of Judaeo-Christian moral values into the public arena has distinguished the religious right of the last decade from its predecessors.

Jesse Helms exemplifies this approach that has contributed appreciably to the shifting of the national agenda to the right. When he entered the Senate, Helms made this claim: "I made a commitment never to make a speech without addressing moral issues. Morality is the glue that holds this country together. You can't get above that."<sup>4</sup> Helms has largely lived up to his commitment by arguing that public policy should consistently be governed by standards of Judaeo-Christian ethics and morality.

For example, in his 1973 address "Survival of Freedom in an Era of Negotiation" Helms argued that rather than negotiating with the immoral, atheistic Soviet Union on arms control, we should join the issues of arms negotiation and negotiation over the basic freedoms denied Soviet citizens.<sup>5</sup> Rather than negotiating over the price and quantity of grain that we might sell to the Soviet Union, we should link our grain concessions to Soviet concessions to introduce free enterprise capitalism into the agricultural sector of their economy. To Helms, negotiations over arms control or grain sales do nothing to alter the immoral nature of the Soviet Union. To Helms, it makes little sense to tacitly lend support to a fundamentally evil society by allowing it to negotiate arms and food agreements with us, unless we are able to negotiate changes in the basic evils of that society.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Martin Medhurst, "Resistance, Conservatism, and Theory Building: A Cautionary Note," *Western Journal of Speech Communication* 49 (1985): 105-06.

<sup>4</sup> Jesse Helms, personal interview, 8 July 1985.

<sup>5</sup> Jesse Helms, "Survival of Freedom in an Era of Negotiation," *Vital Speeches of the Day* 39 (1973): 764-67.

<sup>6</sup> Helms, "Survival" 766-67.



The centrality of Judaeo-Christian morality to Helms's political rhetoric is even more strikingly evident when he speaks about the wide range of pro-family issues. Helms's positions on such issues as the Equal Rights Amendment, abortion, and prayer in the public schools consistently reflect what he believes to be the application of Judaeo-Christian principles to contemporary public issues. No doubt because he feels that Judaeo-Christian morality should animate public policy, Helms feels equally comfortable speaking to church groups or secular groups about the relationship between religion and public policies.<sup>7</sup>

Helms entered the Senate in January of 1973, committed "never to make a speech without addressing moral issues." Fortuitously for him, this was virtually the same period of time when many Fundamentalist church leaders were also discovering politics. The Supreme Court's 1973 pro-abortion decision, the Equal Rights Amendment, plans calling for the drafting of women, and various homosexual rights ordinances, as well as lesser issues, caused many conservative religious leaders to discover politics.<sup>8</sup> When Jerry Falwell and other Fundamentalist leaders began to push politics from the pulpit, they wedged an opening for Helms to a large body of Americans who were naturally sympathetic to his views and theretofore politically inactive. Helms's early willingness to speak out vigorously and uncompromisingly against the Supreme Court's decisions on abortion and prayer in public schools, along with his willingness to back his words with amendments and other efforts to overturn those decisions, quickly made him a political champion of the Religious Right.<sup>9</sup>

Helms's Judaeo-Christian justification of many of his specific positions extends even to his indictment of the entire liberal philosophy. That indictment hinges on his belief that

when you have men [liberals] who no longer believe that God is in charge of human affairs, you have men attempting to take the place of God by means of the Superstate. The all-provident government, which these liberals constantly invoke, is the modern-day version of Baal.<sup>10</sup>

In sum, Jesse Helms's religious belief in the virtue of America's Judaeo-Christian heritage is the underlying causal agent behind virtually all of his political rhetoric. It provides him with the rationale for the public policy positions he advocates. Moreover, Helms's perception that he speaks for fundamental religious truths makes it impossible for him to even consider compromise with his foes and hence naturally gives rise to the disassociative rhetoric that Baker and Fadely find to be so prevalent in his rhetoric.

<sup>7</sup> Sam Hamrick (special assistant for scheduling to Senator Jesse Helms), personal interview, 8 July 1985.

<sup>8</sup> For a brief historical account of the political activity of contemporary Fundamentalist churches, see Richard Viguerie, *The New Right: We're Ready to Lead* (Falls Church: Viguerie, 1980) 155-74.

<sup>9</sup> For an account of the development of Helms's relationship with Fundamentalist church groups, see William D. Snider, *Helms and Hunt: the North Carolina Senate Race, 1984* (Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1985) 104-05.

<sup>10</sup> Jesse Helms, *When Free Men Shall Stand* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976) 16.

## Helms's Senate Speaking

Helms's Senate speeches are meant to be speeches of record. Thus, they are normally well researched and documented. They are clearly organized and are characterized by concrete imagery and apt word choice. The language Helms uses in these speeches tends to be more formal than in his non-Senate speeches. According to his principle legislative aide, Dr. James Lucier, Helms's Senate speeches are prepared with an awareness that they serve to present "the official record, the total case for a position. They are not meant to arouse and engage an audience."<sup>11</sup> Helms observes that his Senate speeches are "not designed for audiences or colleagues in the Senate. They are designed to make legislative history. They are tantamount to legal briefs."<sup>12</sup>

When Helms first entered the Senate, he deliberately began to offer amendments. Many of his major Senate speeches are delivered in support of the amendments he has continually offered since first arriving in the Senate. Typically, he has offered amendments to prohibit abortion, permit prayer in the public schools, eliminate forced busing, or balance the budget. By introducing amendments that enable him to seriously address issues that concern him, Helms has hoped to accomplish three things.<sup>13</sup> First, he has hoped to raise the issue in the public mind, putting it on the public agenda. Second, he has hoped to provide an articulate statement of his position for public record. In so doing, he has provided like-minded advocates with a model persuasive message that is often widely reported and reprinted. Finally, he has hoped to force his colleagues in the Senate to take a clear position and to vote on issues they might otherwise have ignored and avoided.

The third goal, forcing his colleagues to cast a clear vote on issues they might otherwise ignore, is of particular importance. Helms's amendments and the strong speeches he offers in their support have demanded responses. The resulting debates have helped to shift the public agenda to the right. For example, on 22 January 1981, Helms again offered and spoke in support of his amendment banning legalized abortions. He argued that abortion is immoral. "It is not mere coincidence," he claimed, "that abortion first appeared as public policy in Nazi and Communist dictatorships."<sup>14</sup> He claimed that the court decisions which, since 1973, legalized abortion, were simply "legalized fiction, ignoring moral principles that date to antiquity."<sup>15</sup> Helms continued, offering extensive medical evidence suggesting that life begins at the moment of conception, and then claimed that abortion "violates the sanctity of human life." For Helms, this issue, like many others, is one where there is clearly a correct position, based upon Judaeo-Christian morality, that brooks no compromise.

<sup>11</sup> Dr. James Lucier (chief legislative assistant to Senator Jesse Helms), personal interview, 8 July 1985.

<sup>12</sup> Helms, interview.

<sup>13</sup> This paragraph is based on the author's interviews with Senator Helms and Dr. James Lucier, his chief legislative assistant, who also serves as one of his principle political advisors.

<sup>14</sup> Jesse Helms, "The Right to Life," *Congressional Record* 127 (1981): S571.

<sup>15</sup> Helms, "Right" S572.



Helms's use of amendments to introduce issues and well documented, clearly organized, vividly worded speeches to support his positions on those issues has allowed him to choose his opponents and to select the grounds on which the game will be played. As Elizabeth Drew observed early in his Senate career, Helms's amendments and the votes they force are designed to "set up" other senators.<sup>16</sup> Those votes became issues in reelection campaigns. The political action committees of the Right, including Helms's Congressional Club, which supports conservative candidates, utilize the votes that Helms has forced in taking on incumbent senators directly in their own home states. As Drew notes, in the past a senator might have helped to raise funds for the nominee of his party in other states, but rarely would a senator have directly attacked another incumbent or gone to the lengths that Helms does to unseat a targeted member of Congress.<sup>17</sup> As one Democratic senator has noted, "what he has accomplished by doing that [offering and defending amendments] day after day, year after year, was build right wing support that comes back to haunt the other Senators."<sup>18</sup>

In effect, Helms has extended his disassociative rhetoric to the arena of direct political action. Prior to Helms, no senator had ever engaged so extensively in disassociative political tactics toward fellow senators. Helms's disassociative political tactics, like his disassociative rhetoric, is a direct consequence of the centrality of his religious beliefs to his perceptions of public policy.

Shortly after Helms had entered the Senate, the *Raleigh News and Observer* nicknamed him "Senator No," because he so often stood alone. Today, Helms rarely stands alone. Approximately twenty members of the Senate identify themselves as conservatives, and many liberals are voting less liberally and more conservatively in recent years than they did in the early 1970s. Helms's initial willingness to force issues by the introduction of amendments, and then to ardently defend his position, is best explained by one of his staff members who suggests that Helms acts because "it is the right thing to do."<sup>19</sup> Whether it is "the right thing to do" remains to be seen. But certainly Helms has been animated by strong religious beliefs in developing a conscious long-term strategy designed to shift the public agenda to the right and to identify those members of the Senate who do not think as he does. Clearly, Helms's disassociative rhetoric goes beyond words and extends to the development and implementation of political tactics designed to unequivocally disassociate Helms and those senators who are "right" from those senators who are "wrong."

#### Helms's Political Jeremiads

Outside the Senate, Jesse Helms is one of the more sought-after speakers in the United States. Typically, in a noncampaign year, he delivers about two speeches a week, though on occasion, such as during Memorial Day week

<sup>16</sup> Elizabeth Drew, "Jesse Helms," *The New Yorker* 20 July 1981: 83.

<sup>17</sup> Drew 83.

<sup>18</sup> Unnamed senator quoted in Drew 81.

<sup>19</sup> Hamrick, interview.

of 1985, he has delivered as many as nine speeches a week.<sup>20</sup> Helms utilizes ghostwriters and receives aid in preparing both his Senate and non-Senate addresses. However, he maintains full control over his speeches. His background as a journalist and media commentator is far stronger than that of his staff, who tend to be subject matter experts. Hence, he typically makes very substantial revisions of language, even in what his staff anticipates to be final texts. As one of his principle ghostwriters has noted, "the Senator's standards of style are high. He is not too happy with others."<sup>21</sup>

Helms's non-Senate speeches are delivered primarily to sympathetic audiences of conservative supporters. They are consistent in theme with those he delivers in the Senate. Even so, they differ markedly from his Senate addresses in several respects. First, they are not as thoroughly documented and evidenced as his Senate speeches are. Helms tends to rely more heavily on extended examples, striking analogies, and humor when he speaks outside the Senate. Additionally, his language is more informal. Helms claims that these distinctions are deliberate and reflect his attempts to adapt to his audiences.<sup>22</sup> His principle ghostwriters concur, noting that they draw a clear distinction between Senate and non-Senate speeches.<sup>23</sup>

Helms's non-Senate speeches are often jeremiads or jeremiad-like. The distinctive features of the jeremiad have been examined by a variety of scholars, and most acknowledge that the jeremiad has five major characteristics.<sup>24</sup> First, the jeremiad involves an attempt to make the individual members of the audience aware of themselves as part of a special or "chosen" people. Second, the jeremiad places great stress on the urgency and timeliness of the problem it seeks to remedy. Third, the jeremiad contains a condemnation of present society. The Puritan minister would recite the sins of his followers. Secular leaders will condemn the actions of many of their followers. Fourth, the jeremiad contains a proposal or suggestions for resolving the problem. For the Puritan minister, that proposal was normally a return to the paths of righteousness. For the secular orator, that proposal will involve calling upon his audience to return to the values and traditions that have made them a select or chosen people. Finally, speakers close their jeremiads by sharing their vision of a bright future with their audiences of the chosen.

Jesse Helms's addresses outside the United States Senate, given primarily to groups of conservative supporters, often evidence the jeremiad form. Helms acknowledges that he does utilize the jeremiad form and that many

<sup>20</sup> Hamrick, interview.

<sup>21</sup> Lucier, interview.

<sup>22</sup> Helms, interview.

<sup>23</sup> This statement is based on interviews with Helms's staff members Hamrick and Lucier, who are both involved with his speech preparation.

<sup>24</sup> The characteristics of the jeremiad discussed in the remainder of this paper are drawn from several sources including Sacavan Bercovitch, *The American Jeremiad* (Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1978), 4-17; Ronald Carpenter, "The Historical Jeremiad as Rhetorical Genre," *Form and Genre Shaping Rhetorical Action*, ed. Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and Kathleen Hall Jamieson (Falls Church: Speech Communication Assn., n.d.) 103-05; and Perry Miller, *The New England Mind from Colony to Province* (Boston: Beacon, 1953) 27-33.



of his speeches are jeremiad-like. He notes, however, that his use of the jeremiad is unconscious.<sup>25</sup> Similarly, his principles ghostwriter feels that to say many of Helms's speeches are jeremiads "is a fair description," but he adds that using the jeremiad form is "nothing done consciously."<sup>26</sup> Another of his aides indicates that "the [jeremiad] pattern fits many of his speeches."<sup>27</sup>

Though Helms's use of the jeremiad form is unconscious it should not be surprising to find that the rhetorical form which he often uses is rooted in the sermons of early America. In such speeches as his basic campaign speech, delivered throughout North Carolina during his hotly contested 1984 reelection campaign against Governor James Hunt; his addresses to the Conservative Caucus and the Conservative Political Action Committee, delivered in 1984; his Commencement Address delivered at Grove City College in 1982; and his 1980 address to the Republican National Convention, his first nationally televised address, Helms has repeatedly utilized the jeremiad form.<sup>28</sup>

In each of these speeches, Helms claims that Americans are a "chosen people"—chosen, as he said campaigning throughout North Carolina in 1984, because of "our commitment as a people to free enterprise and to liberty and the fundamental Judaeo-Christian moral principles which guided the creation of our Republic."<sup>29</sup> But though Americans are a chosen and select people, Helms finds that "we have lost our sense of perspective over the last 20 years" and hence face urgent problems.<sup>30</sup> Then, depending on the audience and the issue he wishes to address, he details a problem or group of problems, such as our loss of military supremacy, our economic plight, the legalization of abortion, or court-mandated busing, all of which he claims have reached urgent crisis proportions in recent years.

Like the Puritan ministers of old who condemned their followers for creating and contributing to problems by falling from the paths of righteousness, Helms condemns liberal politicians, the unrestrained court system, the liberal press specifically, and all Americans, including his audiences of sympathizers, in general, stating, as he told the graduates in his 1982 commencement

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<sup>25</sup> Helms, interview. The author described the five principle characteristics of the jeremiad to Helms, as they have been described in this study, and asked if he utilized this form. Helms also observed that he had no doubt been exposed to many jeremiads when he had attended church twice weekly in his youth, as well as since that time.

<sup>26</sup> Lucier, interview. The procedure described in note 25 was employed in this interview.

<sup>27</sup> Hamrick, interview. The procedure described in note 25 was employed in this interview.

<sup>28</sup> "Basic Campaign Speech—1984 Senate Campaign" with slight variation delivered repeatedly throughout N. Carolina, Apr.–Nov. 1984; typescript made available to the author by Helms's Senate office. "Remarks to the Tenth Anniversary Dinner, Conservative Caucus," Washington, D.C., 29 Nov. 1984, in *Grassroots: The Leadership Quarterly of the Conservative Caucus* 9 (1985): 2–4. "Address to the Conservative Political Action Committee," Washington, D.C., 1 Mar. 1984; typescript made available to the author by Helms's Senate office. "The Uniting of the Silent Majority—Commencement Address, Grove City College," Grove City, Penn., 15 May 1982, in *Vital Speeches of the Day* 48 (1982): 553–55. "Address to the Republican National Convention," Detroit, Mich., 17 July 1980; typescript made available to the author by Helms's Senate office.

<sup>29</sup> Helms, "Basic Campaign" 1.

<sup>30</sup> Helms, "Basic Campaign" 2. Similarly, see Helms, "The Uniting" 554.



address at Grove City College, "I presume to ask you, on this very special day to consider the proposition that we become part of what we condone."<sup>31</sup> Americans, including the very groups from which Helms draws his support, have for too long tolerated and condoned, he continues, "the liberal elites in the judiciary and in the media particularly, who have carried on for the past three decades a ferocious assault on the fundamental institution of the family."<sup>32</sup> Thus, for Helms, specific liberal groups can be identified as particularly "sinful" and hence as obvious targets of disassociative rhetoric.

Helms then presents a proposal or suggestions for resolving the problems he addresses. Invariably, Helms's solutions involve a return to the Judaeo-Christian moral principles upon which America was founded. To resolve our problems, he told North Carolina voters in 1984, "we need only to ponder the history of mankind—history as old as the Bible, or as contemporary as the counsel of our founding fathers." Whether it is a hard line in dealing with the Soviet Union, a reduction in federal taxing and spending, or the passage of amendments to prevent abortion or to allow prayer in public schools, Helms consistently casts his solutions as the result of the logical application of basic Judaeo-Christian principles to contemporary problems.<sup>33</sup> To reject Helms's solutions, in his eyes, is to reject America's religious heritage. Helms can scarcely be expected to identify with individuals who reject that heritage. Indeed, he must disassociate from them.

### Conclusions

Baker and Fadely have focused on the ways in which Senator Jesse Helms employs the principles of identification. They have illustrated that he relies heavily on disassociative rhetoric, or as they term it, a negative form of identification. Such an observation is both valid and insightful; it helps to provide an explanation of the success of polarizing figures such as Helms. This study has attempted to build on Baker and Fadely's work by viewing Helms's disassociative rhetoric as a sign or manifestation of something much more fundamental to his speaking: his conscious and deliberate decisions to let his perceptions of America's Judaeo-Christian heritage dictate his positions on public policy and shape both his Senate and non-Senate speaking.

When an individual speaks out of fundamental religious convictions, as does Helms, he cannot compromise. He cannot identify, even to a small degree, with his foes. Rather, he must disassociate himself from them. America witnessed that fact most vividly during the years from 1830 to 1860, when abolitionist speakers justified their positions on public policy as the logical application of Judaeo-Christian religious principles to public issues. Well before the Civil War, abolitionists were calling on the free states to disassociate themselves from the Union rather than to remain associated with the slave states. When individuals perceive that they are speaking God-given

<sup>31</sup> Helms, "The Uniting" 553.

<sup>32</sup> Helms, "The Uniting" 554.

<sup>33</sup> See, for examples, any speech cited in note 28.

<sup>34</sup> Helms, "Address to the Republican" 6.

truth and that their foes are entirely in error, disassociative rhetoric is a logical rhetorical tactic. Indeed, such speakers might not be able to live with themselves and their supporters unless they utilize disassociative rhetoric.

Richard M. Weaver concluded his remarkable essay, "Language is Sermonic," by observing that

no one can live a life of direction and purpose without some scheme of values, the rhetorician is a preacher to us, noble if he tries to direct our passion towards noble ends and base if he uses our passion to confuse and degrade us.<sup>35</sup>

Jesse Alexander Helms has relied on his perceptions of America's Judaeo-Christian heritage to shape his positions on contemporary American issues and his speaking on behalf of those positions. Consequently, we can understand why he employs disassociative rhetoric more than most speakers do and why he has become the most conspicuous secular preacher of the religious right. Only time will fully enable us to understand whether he has directed our passion towards noble ends or used our passion to confuse and degrade us.

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<sup>35</sup> Richard M. Weaver, *Language is Sermonic*, ed. Richard L. Johannesen, Rennard Strickland, and Ralph T. Eubanks (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State UP, 1970) 225.

## FIAT POWER AND THE MIRROR STATE COUNTERPLAN

Dean Fadely

The theoretical perspectives of intercollegiate debate are still shifting, and the various strategies and tactics for use in convincing judges still need continual evaluation. The mirror state counterplan is a relatively old, simple, and straightforward form of negative refutation. Many years ago it constituted the typical, almost traditional, form of negative counterproposal. It was valid as a form of negative refutation then, and it remains so today.

Several years ago, a colleague and I argued that

The theoretical perspectives of intercollegiate debate constantly shift. One of the most notable fluctuations of the past decade concerns changing affirmative case constructs. Developing from the stock issues case, has been the comparative advantages case, the utilities case, and the cost benefits analysis case. In addition to these approaches, affirmative teams utilize goals cases, criteria cases, and alternative justification cases, thereby providing them with various strategies and tactics for use in convincing judges. In light of the increasing options open to the affirmative, a necessity arises to reconsider the various strategies open to the negative.<sup>1</sup>

Richard H. Dempsey and David J. Hartmann have undertaken such a reconsideration in their recently published article entitled "Mirror State Counterplans: Illegitimate, Topical, or Magical?"<sup>2</sup> The purpose of this essay is to evaluate the mirror state counterplan both generally and in light of the criticisms leveled against it by Dempsey and Hartmann. Specifically, I will advance three major arguments: (1) mirror state counterplans can fulfill the general requirements that negative counterproposals must meet; (2) mirror state counterplans can fulfill the particular requisites inherent in this type of policy option; and (3) the recent criticisms of the mirror state counterplan by Dempsey and Hartmann rest on interrelated misconceptions concerning the nature of fiat power.

Mirror state counterplans are not new. They were in use when I debated in high school—a time period that, contrary to the rumors started by some of my students, did not interface with the Lincoln-Douglas debates but that did precede the Kennedy-Nixon debates. The basic notion underlying mirror

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<sup>1</sup> M. Gordon Widenhouse and Dean Fadely, "Negative Constructs: A Perspective," *Debate Issues* XI (Jan. 1978): 9–13.

<sup>2</sup> *Journal of the American Forensic Association* XXI (Winter 1985): 161–66. Other articles that have undertaken this reconsideration while treating issues relevant to this discussion include the following: Robert Branham, "The Counterplan as Disadvantage," *Speaker and Gavel* XVI (Summer 1979): 61–66; and Michel E. Mayer and Jerold Hall, "Evaluating the Studies Counterplan: Topicality and Competitiveness," *Speaker and Gavel* XVI (Summer 1979): 67–72.



state counterplans can be expressed in a single statement: Let the states do it. The fundamental idea is that each state can enact a miniature version of an affirmative plan—the latter to be adopted on the federal level. For example, the 1981–82 national debate proposition was “Resolved: That the federal government should significantly curtail the powers of labor unions in the United States.” A mirror state counterplan would call for the states to significantly curtail the powers of labor unions within their borders. With this definition in mind, let us turn to the first argument: mirror state counterplans can fulfill the general requirements that negative counterproposals must meet.

Traditionally, debate theory has held that regardless of the specific resolution under consideration, a negative counterplan must meet certain requirements if it is to be *prima facie*. In other words, there are resolutionally invariant requisites for a negative counterproposal. While the exact terminology for these requirements varies among theorists, they are usually known as: (1) nontopicality, (2) mutual exclusivity, and (3) superiority.<sup>3,4</sup>

The first two characteristics, nontopicality and mutual exclusivity, are logical consequences of the major mandate under which all negative teams operate: the duty of the negative is to deny the resolution. Because the first duty of the negative is to deny the resolution, the counterproposal must be nontopical. Obviously, if the counterplan is topical, the negative is supporting, not denying, the resolution. Similarly, the counterplan must be mutually exclusive from the policy option advocated by the affirmative team. The judge(s) must have to choose between, or even among, the competing policies. If the judge(s) could vote for all of the policies advocated in a given debate, including the counterplan, in a rational manner,<sup>4</sup> then the negative team would have failed to meet its primary responsibility of denying the resolution; additionally, the affirmative team would have achieved its primary obligation of upholding the resolution.

While the third characteristic of a counterproposal—superiority—is not, in my opinion, as essential or as universally agreed upon<sup>5</sup> as the first two, it is nevertheless important. As has been argued:

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<sup>3</sup> Widenhouse and Fadely: Allan J. Lichtman and Daniel M. Rohrer, “A General Theory of the Counterplan,” *Advanced Debate Readings in Theory, Practice, and Teaching*, ed. David A. Thomas (Skokie: National Textbook, 1979) 200–12; Austin J. Freeley, *Argumentation and Debate: Reasoned Decision Making* (Belmont: Wadsworth, 1981) 211–16; Maridell Fryar and David A. Thomas, *Basic Debate* (Lincolnwood: National Textbook, 1983), 88–90; and Theodore F. Shekels, Jr., *Debating Applied Rhetorical Theory* (New York: Longman, 1984) 157–61, 207–10. For a slightly different interpretation, see Sanders, who, although he admits “some variance with other writers in this area,” takes a similar position. Gerald H. Sanders, *Introduction to Contemporary Academic Debate* (Prospect Heights: Waveland, 1983) 107–15.

<sup>4</sup> The important phrase to remember is “in a rational manner.” If the negative counterplan alone is better than either the affirmative plan alone or the negative counterplan plus the affirmative plan, then it would not be a rational decision to vote for either the affirmative plan alone or the negative counterproposal plus the affirmative plan.

<sup>5</sup> For example, see J. W. Patterson and David Zarefsky, *Contemporary Debate* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1983) 218. Also see Freeley, 4th ed. 219.

Some theorists argue that the counterplan must be superior to the affirmative proposal.<sup>6</sup> The rationale for this position hinges on the notion that, if the affirmative plan is as good as the counterplan, then the resolution has not been defeated and the negative should lose. Although it seems hypothetical that a debate involving two explicit policy systems could end in a virtual tie, if that did occur, the presumption should rest with which ever proposal involves less risk. Thus, the negative counterplan should be superior in some way, albeit less risk, to the affirmative proposal.<sup>7</sup>

The question now arises: Can a mirror state counterplan meet these three basic requirements? To help answer this query, let us focus on the issue of nontopicality and hypothesize that two teams are debating the proposition "Resolved: That the federal government should abolish laws regulating the manufacture, sale, distribution, and possession of obscene and/or pornographic material(s)." The affirmative argues that such action should be taken and, logically, proposes a constitutional amendment to expand the scope of the first amendment so that heretofore obscene and/or pornographic material(s) become protected as free speech. Such an amendment would overturn Supreme Court decisions such as *Miller* and *Paris Adult Theatre I* and would render unconstitutional laws such as comstock. In response, the negative team can argue that the abolition should be effected not by the affirmative plan but by the actions of the states. Because the affirmative team has operationally defined the resolution in terms of a constitutional amendment, and, because the agent of action is the federal government, the negative counterplan constitutes a clear denial of the resolution.<sup>8</sup>

Thus, the negative counterplan is nontopical. Austin J. Freeley supports this topicality analysis:

The negative may establish that its counterplan is nonpropositional (or nontopical) in a number of ways. It may argue that the counterplan should be carried out by a different level of government than that called for in the resolution (e.g., the state rather than the federal government should do it).<sup>9</sup>

Negative teams can achieve mutual exclusivity for their policy option in several ways. They may use the funding needed to implement the affirmative proposal for their plan. They may usurp the affirmative team's funding mechanisms. They may exploit a time lag by which it is impossible to implement the affirmative proposal as quickly as the negative counterplan. Thus, when the judge(s) vote at the end of the round, the negative plan is implemented first and, *arguendo*, the need for the affirmative policy is obviated. Depending on the particulars of the resolution being debated and on the provisions of

<sup>6</sup> In addition to the sources cited in footnotes 3 and 4, see the following: Glenn R. Capp and Thelma Robuck Capp, *Principles of Argumentation and Debate* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1965) 50-52; Wayne C. Eubank, "Developing the Case," *Argumentation and Debate: Principles and Practices*, ed. James H. McBath (New York: Holt, 1963) 113-16; Glen E. Mills, *Reason in Controversy* 2nd ed. (Boston: Allyn, 1968) 108; and Wayne N. Thompson, *Modern Argumentation and Debate: Principles and Practices* (New York: Harper, 1971) 88-92.

<sup>7</sup> Widenhouse and Fadely 12.

<sup>8</sup> I would argue that even if the resolution did not specify an agent of action, the negative team, depending on the particulars of the debate, could propose a sound mirror state counterplan.

<sup>9</sup> Freeley 211-12.



the mirror state counterplan, all three of the options, as well as others, are available.

As previously indicated, negative debaters often try to achieve counterplan superiority by proving that the negative counterproposal entails less risk than the affirmative policy option. Freeley cites the following example:

... on the "consumer product safety" proposition, negatives using a "states" counterplan argued that the states rather than the federal government should regulate a particular consumer product—if a plan turned out to be undesirable, less harm would be done on a statewide basis than if the plan were nationwide. If the plan turned out to be desirable, then other states would adopt it.<sup>10</sup>

It would appear, then, that taken at face value, a mirror state counterplan can fulfill the three basic requirements that all negative counterplans must meet. The question now arises: Can a mirror state counterplan fulfill any specialized requirements inherent in this specific type of counterproposal?

The major requirement for a mirror state counterplan would appear to be that the action(s) of the states must be arguably able to achieve the results of the affirmative proposal. This requirement is resolutionally variant. Sometimes the national proposition obviously lends itself to a mirror state counterplan approach; the previous examples of the 1976–77 consumer product safety topic and the 1981–82 labor union topic are cases in point. Sometimes the wording of the national resolution precludes, or at least militates against, the use of a mirror state counterplan. For example, I cannot envision a mirror state counterplan on either the 1974–75 proposition "Resolved: That the power of the presidency should be significantly curtailed" or the 1977–78 resolution "That law enforcement agencies should be given significantly greater freedom in the investigation and/or prosecution of felony crimes."<sup>11</sup> However, that a mirror state counterplan is resolutionally variant in no way denies its theoretical validity. This observation concerns a practical, not a theoretical, limitation.

We have so far concluded that the mirror state counterplan can fulfill the general requirements which all negative counterproposals must meet as well as the particular requirements of this type of counterplan. We are now ready to consider the third major argument of our essay—that Dempsey and Hartmann's recent criticisms of the mirror state counterplan rest on interrelated misconceptions concerning the nature of fiat power.

In the gamelike world of competitive tournament debating, fiat power is simply another rule of the game. In the real world, it would be impossible

<sup>10</sup> Freeley 212.

<sup>11</sup> I am not always in agreement with Arthur Schopenhauer's rather cynical observation that "every man takes the limits of his own field of vision for the limits of the world." My inability to envision a mirror state counterplan on these propositions does not rule out the possibility that the more creative and imaginative mind of an intercollegiate debater could not generate one. However, for the sake of discussion, I am willing to stipulate that some national resolutions preclude the use of mirror state counterplans, and I cite two instances that I consider to be examples of such preclusion.

<sup>12</sup> David A. Ling and Robert V. Seltzer, "The Role of Attitudinal Inherency in Contemporary Debate," *Journal of the American Forensic Association* VII (Spring 1971): 278–83. See especially 280.

for two college students, let alone two high school students, to implement the policies that an affirmative team calls for in its plan. Because, in actuality, the plan could not be implemented, it could not be thoroughly analyzed and evaluated. Therefore, the processes and merits of competitive tournament debate would be thwarted. To solve this problem, the idea of fiat power has evolved.

Fiat power is the power to say hypothetically or for the sake of argument that the affirmative plan has been implemented. Under this stipulation, the negative team can more easily debate on another area of clash—the results of the plan. While fiat power enables debaters to pretend, there are limitations on the pretense—common sense limitations designed to improve the quality of competitive debating. For example, the affirmative team cannot fiat the physically impossible, let us say, a magic wand to cure the ills of the world. This limitation, which has been referred to as “the scope of could,”<sup>12</sup> holds that what an affirmative advocates and fiats must be within the realm of physical possibility. That is, it *could* happen. This does not mean that it *would* happen or even that it is *likely* to happen. It means only that it is *theoretically possible* for the advocated proposal to be implemented. Obviously it is futile to debate magic wands and mystical cures; thus, neither side can fiat these. Similarly, neither side can fiat away problems associated with the policy options they have espoused—problems such as the lack of solvency or the presence of disadvantages.

Gerald H. Sanders gives a straightforward explication of fiat power:

Another right of the affirmative that is important is the power of fiat. This means that the affirmative can mandate the implementation of their proposal. Remember that all debate resolutions contain the word “should” in them. If the negative were to be able to argue legitimately that the affirmative plan will never be adopted by congress, for instance, the entire debate could revolve around this issue and you would never consider the substance of the issues involved. In fact, the negative could be admitting attitudinal inherency if they argued in this manner. However, in order to preclude this possibility, the affirmative can fiat their proposal into existence. In other words, they only have to argue that the proposal “should” be adopted, not that it “would” be adopted. This is why a negative argument like the one mentioned above is called a “should-would” argument and is not legitimate in academic debate.<sup>13</sup> Let me hasten to add that the affirmative is limited to fiating their program into existence. They cannot fiat solvency. Also, the negative can argue some of the reasoning behind congress’ attitude against the affirmative proposal. There may be the source of some good disadvantages here. However, an argument that simply states that congress will not adopt the proposal is overcome by the affirmative fiat power.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup> In discussing a should-would argument, H. Francis Short states that “. . . when the affirmative argues that its proposition should be accepted, it does not have to defend the would argument. Its plan assumes the nature of a fiat.” H. Francis Short, “Affirmative Case Building,” *Introduction to Debate*, ed. Carolyn Keefe, Thomas B. Harte, and Laurence E. Norton (New York: Macmillan, 1982) 175. Austin J. Freeley is even more explicit in his discussion of the illegitimacy of should-would when he writes that “The negative team must avoid the pointless, in educational debate, ‘should-would’ argument. The point is not *would*—but *should*—the affirmative proposal be adopted” (emphasis Freeley’s). Freeley 47–48.

<sup>14</sup> Sanders 56.



Theodore F. Sheckels, Jr., supplies a similar analysis of fiat power without restricting it to any one side:

The word "should" appears often in policy resolutions. I have not treated it as a key term in need of definition because its definition in debating is fairly standardized. "Should" means "ought to but not necessarily will." This standardized definition implies two important conventions of debate: (1) that the team advocating the resolution *does not* have to show it will be adopted; (2) that the team advocating the resolution *does not* have to show that a Constitutional amendment will be passed by Congress and ratified by the requisite number of states if an amendment is necessary for the presented or implied policy to take effect. Both of these conventions are subsumed under the term "fiat power." The team advocating a policy is permitted to command or "fiat" the presented or implied policy into operation, bypassing, as it were, the necessary legislative actions. This convention has long been observed in debating so that attention will be directed toward the merits of the resolution, not the political dimensions any presented or implied policy possesses. Beginning debaters need to know about this convention so that they do not waste time discussing whether Congress will or will not pass a policy.<sup>15</sup>

Fryar and Thomas give a succinct summary of the concept, defining fiat as

An assumed power to put a proposal into effect; a legal mandate binding on the parties involved, overriding their personal attitudes. Debaters are allowed to say their proposals are to be implemented "by fiat" for the sake of avoiding quibbles over whether, in the real world, such proposals could be expected to receive approval. Fiat power is limited to matter subject to law; it is not a "magic wand" to avoid substantive argument. For example, an energy bill could be adopted by fiat, but a new oil supply cannot be discovered by fiat.<sup>16</sup>

Dempsey and Hartmann misanalyze the nature of fiat power: (1) they confuse *should* with *would* (some attendant strawperson argumentation arises from this confusion), and (2) they misanalyze authoritative testimony regarding the nature of fiat.

Dempsey and Hartmann confuse *should* with *would*. For example, in discussing the mirror state counterplan, they assert that "all fifty states simply won't adopt laws on their own."<sup>17</sup> They then conclude that because the states won't adopt such laws, a negative debate team cannot legitimately propose such a counterplan.<sup>18</sup> Maybe all fifty states would adopt uniform laws on their own if the reasons for doing so were rationally compelling. I will address this idea subsequently. However, whether the states would or would not adopt laws is not the major issue to be considered. In terms of competitive tournament debate, the issue is whether they *should*, not whether they *would*. Dempsey and Hartmann commit a *should-would* error. They ignore a central aspect of fiat power. In the words of Sheckels, previously noted, "the team advocating a policy is permitted to command or 'fiat' the presented or implied policy into operation, bypassing, as it were, the necessary legislative actions."<sup>19</sup> Likewise, the negative can bypass the necessary legislative actions in their counterplan. To argue that the legislative actions

<sup>15</sup> Sheckels 14.

<sup>16</sup> Fryar and Thomas 198.

<sup>17</sup> Dempsey and Hartmann 162.

<sup>18</sup> Dempsey and Hartmann 162.

<sup>19</sup> Sheckels 14.



would not happen and therefore that the negative counterplan would not eventuate, clearly lies outside the limits of contest debating.

Furthermore, Dempsey and Hartmann's idea of uniform laws is a straw-person argument. All fifty states have adopted laws against actions such as arson, murder, and rape. While it is true that these laws vary from state to state, this variance is relatively unimportant. The laws vary because each state legislature, acting rationally (we hope), passed variants of the law that, in their opinion, were best-suited for the problems and social values of its state. If the problems and societal values of all the states were as uniform as the problems and societal values argued in a first affirmative constructive, the probability of uniform state laws would be increased. Furthermore, if there were overriding reasons for uniform state laws, if uniform state laws should be passed, if such laws were indeed logically desirable, then the probability of the passage of uniform laws, by state legislatures, would be greater.

The important issue to be considered is not whether the laws are uniform but whether the laws are solvent. Laws vary from state to state neither because of a plot to reduce the effectiveness of jurisprudence nor because of accident. Laws vary from state to state because, in the opinion of state lawmakers, a specific version of a law is more appropriate for their state. State lawmakers believe that the individuality of state laws increases their solvency. Thus, Dempsey and Hartmann assume, without proof, that non-uniform but similar state laws could not be used in a mirror state counterplan. They assume that such laws would not be solvent because they are not identical.

Dempsey and Hartmann further assume that states would not pass uniform laws even if it were in their interest to do so. However, they do cite evidence suggesting that states have profited from non-uniform laws and that it is therefore in the rational self-interest of states to enact such laws.<sup>20</sup> If the rationale for any course of action were as great as the typical first affirmative constructive, i.e., mounds of dead bodies, or mounds of injured, wounded, maimed, and bleeding bodies, or economic loss, or even the potential for any or all of the above, then that course of action would, we hope, be adopted by rational lawmakers, albeit rational lawmakers representing fifty states. Dempsey and Hartmann, in short, ignore what some theorists have referred to as "the inherent and compelling need."<sup>21</sup>

In addition to confusing *should* with *would* and engaging in strawperson argumentation, Dempsey and Hartmann make several other statements that indicate some confusion either about the nature of fiat or about their research methods. For example, they cite Austin J. Freeley extensively on the nature of fiat power:

Freeley (1981) like others, limits fiat power by noting that it cannot extend to 'unreasonable' provisions and that the plans are subject to the normal political processes associated with the agent of action.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Dempsey and Hartmann 162.

<sup>21</sup> For example, see Robert P. Newman, "The Inherent and Compelling Need," *Journal of the American Forensic Association* II (May 1965): 66-71.

<sup>22</sup> Dempsey and Hartmann 161. The inclusion of the words "associated with the agent of action" is apparently Dempsey and Hartmann's, for these words do not appear on page 167—or on page 168, for that matter—of Freeley's text.

Dempsey and Hartmann then assert that "negatives typically implement mirror counterplans"<sup>23</sup> in ways that are unreasonable and not "subject to the normal political processes."<sup>24</sup>

A comparison of the actual statement in Freeley's text with Dempsey and Hartmann's paraphrase leads me to believe that Freeley's meaning of "unreasonable" and "normal political processes" is different from the meaning inferred by Dempsey and Hartmann. The following is the complete quotation from Freeley. The italicized words are those cited by Dempsey and Hartmann:

Affirmatives may fiat reasonable provisions for their plan. For instance, they may stipulate that their administrative body be bipartisan or nonpartisan; they may stipulate geographic representation; they may provide that members of the body be lawyers, physicians, or accountants or meet various professional standards. Indeed, they may stipulate anything for which there is a reasonable warrant or relevant analogy.

Affirmatives may *not*, however, fiat *unreasonable provisions* for their plan. For instance, in a debate on consumer protection, the affirmatives may not fiat that their administrative body will be headed by Ralph Nader; in a debate on crime control, they may not fiat that the members of their administrative body will be incorruptible, if they designate a Congressional committee to investigate the CIA, they may not fiat that all of the members will be left-wing Democrats. In short, the affirmative plan is *subject to normal political processes* and its members are subject to normal human frailties. The affirmative may not appoint "Jesus Christ Superstar" to its administrative body and stipulate that miracles will be passed to overcome attitudinal inherency and any other problems that block the status quo from functioning in a state of perfection.<sup>25</sup>

My interpretation of this passage is that the term "normal political processes" essentially means the possible. "Unreasonable" provisions are provisions that, by Freeley's examples, are impossible to guarantee other than by the use of fiat power, which would constitute a *petitio principii*. Certainly nothing in Freeley's text condemns mirror state counterplans; rather, as has been indicated, Freeley specifically holds that the negative may argue them.<sup>26</sup> This latter fact also seems to indicate that Dempsey and Hartmann misanalyze or misapply Professor Freeley's treatment of fiat power and the counterplan. They then use this misanalysis to argue against a legitimate form of negative argumentation—the mirror state counterplan.

The theoretical perspectives of intercollegiate debate are still shifting, and the various strategies and tactics used to convince judges still need continual evaluation. The mirror state counterplan is a relatively old, simple, and straightforward form of negative refutation. Many years ago it constituted, in my opinion, the typical, almost traditional, form of negative counterproposal. Certainly the mirror state counterplan is no less valid today than it was in that era presaging the Kennedy-Nixon debates.

<sup>23</sup> Dempsey and Hartmann 161. Also see 163.

<sup>24</sup> Dempsey and Hartmann 161-64.

<sup>25</sup> Freeley 167-68.

<sup>26</sup> Freeley is not alone in explicitly stating the legitimacy of mirror state counterplans. Sanders also indicates that the use of a mirror state counterplan is a legitimate line of negative refutation, although he suggests that it, along with the conditional counterplan, the hypothetical counterplan, and the studies counterplan, constitutes "poor strategy in academic debate." Sanders 111-12.



## TOWARD A THEORY OF CONTEMPORARY DEBATE

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The intercollegiate debate community has been divided into two segments. The first supports the National Debate Tournament (NDT) style, which has been the norm since the mid-1940s. The second backs the Cross Examination Debate Association (CEDA) style, which emerged as an alternative to the former in the mid seventies. Some critics have suggested that the two styles are drastically different, while others maintain that they are simply different perspectives for discussing various topics. This essay proposes that the two types of intercollegiate debate are contemporary manifestations of classical rhetorical traditions. Specifically, the arguments of NDT debate proponents reflect many of the principles that Plato defended in his system of dialectics; and the reasonings of CEDA debate supporters are similar to many of the fundamentals that Aristotle defended in *The Rhetoric*. Our purpose is not to suggest that the similarities between Plato and NDT or CEDA and Aristotle are causal, intentional, or perfectly consistent. Rather, observing that over sixty percent of the debate community competes apart from the other segment, we attempt to answer this question: Was CEDA's rejection of NDT an intellectual conversion that mirrors Aristotle's rejection of Plato? In this essay, we first review the theoretical and empirical literature concerning the differences and similarities between NDT and CEDA. Second, we suggest that NDT debate and Platonic philosophies are similar ideologically. And third, we suggest that CEDA debate and the Aristotelian models are similar.

Since its inception, the NDT has had a profound impact on the style of intercollegiate debate. The NDT's influence is so evident that the acronym *NDT Style* has been widely used to describe the approach and methods used by intercollegiate debaters. Williams has noted that the NDT influences debate practices via a "trickle-down" effect (5).

In recent years, some critics have asserted that NDT debate has evolved into an activity in which vocal delivery is sacrificed for strategic advantage. Brooks argued that "... NDT judges have failed to demand that debaters speak at a rate that allows the arguments and evidence to be presented, understood, and considered within the format of the oral presentation" (14). Research has confirmed Brooks's assertion that NDT speaking rates have increased significantly (Colbert 18). Other critics have complained that the activity places too much emphasis on evidence and that, consequently, analysis and persuasion are not given sufficient attention. Hollihan, Riley, and Austin explained that the Cross Examination Debate Association "... was

created [in the early 1970s] because Howe and his colleagues believed that NDT debate was failing in its educational mission. Debaters were speaking too quickly, reading too much evidence, and relying on jargon that could not be understood by anyone except trained debate judges" (872). Disenchanted by the style of NDT debate, several debate coaches saw CEDA as an alternative to NDT debate.

Those debate coaches who held similar convictions about what intercollegiate debate should be began to sponsor CEDA competition. According to one source, "Any debate tournament director may request permission to sponsor a CEDA division in which the CEDA topic must be used in a cross-examination format, and points may be acquired toward a national sweepstakes ranking at the end of the year. CEDA is governed by an Executive Council, which conducts its own selection of national topic, one to be used in each half of the debate season. In the school year 1979-1980, 146 colleges competed in one or more CEDA tournaments" (Norton 20). Ingalls reported that "CEDA has 285 member institutions. . . . Most of its gains were at the expense of NDT, which suffered a decline in membership into the early 1980's. . . ." (15).

Perhaps the most important implication concerning the departure from the NDT style of debate was the philosophical standpoint of the creators of CEDA.

. . . CEDA has strived to be different from NDT debate. . . . what has made CEDA different from NDT . . . is not the format or the type of proposition used, but rather the primary goals and organizing principles of the organization. The CEDA community was united by the conviction that NDT did not serve as an appropriate argumentative laboratory. In short, the proponents of CEDA debate shared a vision of proper orientation for an intercollegiate debate program (Hollihan, Riley, and Austin 871).

Some CEDA proponents charged that NDT had failed to meet its educational mission (Hollihan, Riley, and Austin). Jack Howe, the founder of CEDA debate, explained that "CEDA debate is at variance with NDT debate in three major aspects: (1) in its attitude toward evidence; (2) in delivery techniques and (3) in its emphasis on an audience-oriented approach to debate" (1). Thomas made this observation: "One [CEDA] goal was to furnish a communication-centered event, in contrast to NDT's information-processing orientation. The implications of this difference were in preferred manners of style and delivery, along with weight placed upon evidence in debates" (17).

In 1983, Lee, Lee, and Seeger surveyed over seventy forensics directors and concluded that CEDA and NDT differed significantly in their perceptions of the following: students' workload (as perceived by directors), coaching workload, the importance of teaching good public speaking skills, rapid delivery as the major problem with debate, too much emphasis on evidence as the major problem with debate, and the necessity of high school experience for success in competition (845-51).

The Lee, Lee, and Seeger survey demonstrated many substantial differences between CEDA and NDT, perhaps most important of which was the difference in the forensics directors' perceived educational mission. Though speaking style and argumentative skills are not mutually exclusive and appear



important to both NDT and CEDA participants, the relative emphasis that different debate coaches place on these skills reflects the coaches' differing perceptions. Lee, Lee, and Seeger offered this conclusion: "[w]hile we do not claim that our results justify changes in practice, we will argue that more research is warranted in order to more definitively describe and account for some of the serious tendencies this study infers" (855).

Hollihan, Riley, and Austin argued that "... the differences between CEDA and NDT debate should be recognized for what they are: differences in exemplar models. CEDA debates are not substantially different from NDT because of their quasi-value topics. They are different only to the extent that the judges who hear the rounds perpetuate the goal of the activity by using their ballots to teach and reward debaters who reflect the goals of CEDA." The authors sampled ballots from a large NDT/CEDA tournament (at the University of Utah) and concluded that "... the content analysis found CEDA judges are more interested in delivery, speed, educational and personal comments than the NDT judges, while NDT judges were more concerned with argument and theory issues than CEDA judges. ... What remains to be considered is whether or not these differences in judging behavior are good ones" (878).

While several scholars have argued that CEDA and NDT are different, others have contended that they are not. Rowland, for example, argued that "The sharp distinction which many theorists have drawn between value and policy debate is unfortunate. Values and policies are so intertwined that it is impossible to consider one without the other. The relative worth of competing policies can be measured only by comparing the importance of the values which the policies fulfill. At the same time, the relative worth of competing values can be measured only by considering the effects which the values would have by treating them if they were to guide human conduct. The values can be evaluated only as implicit policies" (833). Matlon, for instance, contended that "... values are seldom, if ever, argued in a vacuum. They are closely intertwined with statements of fact and attitudes about policy" (194). Vasilus concurred with this explanation: "... it is unlikely that values could be divorced from their policy implications" (842). And Bartanen recognizes the "inevitable and necessary interrelationships between values and policies in political decision-making" (14). Dudczak concluded that "... [v]alue propositions and policy propositions differ only in their beginning points, but are otherwise necessarily connected. Values not only underlie the justification for action, they also suggest the action itself" (842).

It is clear that the intercollegiate debate community is divided. While similarities exist between value and policy debate—namely, in the interdependence of concept and application—great philosophical differences are apparent in the teaching approaches, goals, and methods of intercollegiate debate instructors. The fundamental difference is far from new and is not unique to intercollegiate debate. In fact, the NDT and CEDA conflict can be viewed as a division of dialectic and Aristotelian belief systems within the debate community. We attempt to answer the question "Are the differences between NDT and CEDA debate fundamentally differences in classical rhetorical models?" We maintain that the current division in the debate community is similar in many ways to that which occurred in ancient Greece.

Dialectics: The NDT Approach

Plato, who formed the dialectic school of rhetorical thought, argued that good rhetoric is based upon knowledge and truth. He believed that rhetoricians must define terms and concern themselves with the arrangement of materials. Most important, Plato was opposed to the emphasis of stylistic and audience-centered forms of public discourse. In his classic text, *The Phaedrus*, Plato communicated his position within a dialogue between Phaedrus and Socrates.

Are you and I required to extol the speech not merely on the score of its authors lucidity and terseness of expression, and his consistently precise and well-polished vocabulary, but also for his having said what he ought? (Hackerforth 32)

Wilson and Arnold suggested that Plato was concerned with the content or truth of a message, not with its delivery. Their best summary of Plato's position states that not all speech writing is good but that well-conceived, well-intended speeches permeated with truth are powerful instruments and may be employed for social and spiritual good (23). Not only was Plato concerned that the rhetorician search for truth, but he also attacked those who supported persuasive delivery and audience-centered philosophies. He expressed his position in these words: "... I have heard it said that it's not necessary for the man who plans to be an orator to learn what is really just and true, but only what seems so to the crowd who will pass judgement; and in the same way he may neglect what is good and beautiful and concentrate on what will seem so; for it is from what seems to be true that persuasion comes, not from the real truth" (Helmbold and Rabinowitz 46).

The NDT debate community tends to have similar views, according to an analysis of their debate practices. Their concern is with content, which is proven by their preoccupation with evidence. Jones wrote that the "[d]etermination to debate only propositions of policy is a reflection of tradition; we tend to value or believe only those ideas supported by facts or statistics—scientism. . . . The resulting conflict, proposition of policy vs. proposition of value, is a prime example of the fact-value dichotomy. . . ." (2). Perhaps NDT's interest of argument validity is not exactly the same as Plato's search for the truth; nevertheless, emphasizing *what* is said rather than *how* it is said is common to both NDT and the dialectic school.

The Lee, Lee, and Seeger survey revealed that perceptions of evidence differ significantly between NDT and CEDA forensics directors. Any observer of an NDT debate will testify that judges spend from a few to thirty minutes after a typical debate examining evidence presented during the round (Brooks 14). This practice is sometimes followed even when the judge comprehends that evidence, which is critically examined to weigh its validity or truth. Hollihan, Riley, and Austin's content analysis of judges' ballots appear to be consistent with this contention. They found that NDT judges are most concerned with argument and theory. Debates are often judged on the basis of which debate team best supported the truth of its example of the resolution. This is not to say that good speaking style is discouraged; however, the significant increase in speaking rates in NDT debate (Colbert 18) was not perpetuated by judges who demanded an emphasis on presentation. In short,



the philosophies of NDT proponents are similar to Plato's perception that *what* is said is more important than *how* it is said.

One other relationship between dialectics and NDT that warrants brief mentioning is the discrepancy over the acceptance and perpetuation of faster-than-normal speaking rates. Surely Plato did not support a rapid-fire delivery. However, his concern was with experts and not with an audience consisting of the masses. The average person on the street could not go in and render a justifiable decision in a typical NDT debate. While this may also be the case for some CEDA debates, the two factions have fundamentally different underlying philosophies with regard to audience.

#### Aristotelian: The CEDA Approach

Aristotle, a student of Plato, was one of the greatest rhetorical theorists. The three books of his *Rhetoric* are perhaps the most influential writings about public speaking. In Baldwin's opinion, *The Rhetoric*, though short, reveals the "full reach" of Aristotle's intelligence. The treatise is in three books, or sections. According to Baldwin's classification, Book I deals with the necessities and opportunities of the speaker, Book II with the audience, and Book III with the speech itself. Thonssen and Baird argued that "in many respects the *Rhetoric* accepts, elaborates, and systematizes doctrines set forth in the *Phaedrus*. Aristotle adopted the typically Platonic principles that the contemporary writers were treating rhetoric in an unscientific manner, that rhetoric was closely related to dialectic, and that the orator should be conversant with the laws of human nature as they affected the response of hearers" (58).

In Book I, Aristotle writes about persuasion, and he contrasts popular speaking and dialectics. He defines rhetoric as "... the faculty of discovering in a particular case what are the available means of persuasion" (Cooper 7). Book II discusses the audience. Wilson and Arnold wrote that Book II "... contains discussions of how emotions affect judgements of listeners and how such feelings as anger, love, fear, shame, benevolence, pity, and the like are evoked by what is said ... The influence of fortune, wealth, and power upon human character is explored" (24). In the book of speech, Book III, Aristotle explains that delivery "... is something we must pay attention to because of the 'sorry nature' of the audience." On the problems of effective delivery, however, Aristotle wrote little. When he turns to style, Aristotle discards most of his predecessor's strictures on requisites of good style, preferring to emphasize clarity above all else" (Wilson and Arnold 25). In short, Aristotle emphasized persuasive approaches, audience-centered approaches, and effective delivery. Although he acknowledged that rhetoric and dialectics are counterparts, he believed that the distinctions between the two are important.

Rieke and Sillars distinguished between dialectical and rhetorical theories.

Plato reasoned that it is possible for human argument to achieve absolute truth, and his method, accordingly, was dialectic. Furthermore, if one has absolute truth, one does not negotiate, compromise, or even supplicate with others. The truth is stated in the clearest possible way for those who are able to understand. ... On the other hand, Aristotle asserted that ... humans argue about their own actions which are never inevitable and about which

one could, therefore, never have absolute truth. He did, however, feel that some judgements are more "probably" true than others. But dialectic alone would be insufficient to make such judgements because of the conditional nature of the questions and the need to enter human judgement into equation. Therefore, he posited a system which would secure on each question all that could be persuasively said (15-16).

Aristotle's rhetorical school held to many philosophies similar to those of today's CEDA followers. Aristotle argued that rhetoric is discovering the available means of persuasion. He advanced an audience-centered approach, wrote about delivery, and provided an orderly structure outlining the principles of rhetoric. Thonssen and Baird explained that Aristotle acknowledged Plato's truth but made probability an essential substructure of rhetoric (58). Hunt argued that "Plato sought to reform life (policy-making), while Aristotle was more interested in reorganizing theory about life. For this reason Aristotle's *Rhetoric* is largely detached from both morality and pedagogy. It is neither a manual of rules nor a collection of injunctions. It is an unmoral and scientific analysis of the means of persuasion (audience adaptation)" (3). Aristotle's *Rhetoric* is not void of concern for truth, but its emphasis or goal is more related to the persuasion of an audience.

The CEDA debate community seems to share views of rhetoric with Aristotle. The Lee, Lee, and Seeger survey, as well as the content analysis by Hollihan, Riley, and Austin, is consistent with the conclusion that CEDA debate follows several philosophies posited by Aristotle. Both CEDA proponents and Aristotle express concern for an audience-centered approach, proper delivery, and emphasis on style. Rieke and Sillars offered this conclusion: "Aristotle's rhetorical system is most clearly antecedent of an audience-centered theory of argumentation. . . . (M)uch of Aristotle's rhetorical theory serves as an inspiration for an audience-centered perspective on argumentation" (16).

### Conclusions

Perhaps the underlying issue that has divided the intercollegiate debate community is a continuation of the ancient philosophical difference over views toward rhetoric. We do not suggest that conscious and intentional discrepancies over classical rhetorical theories caused the current division. However, many similar views exist between Plato's view of rhetoric and NDT debate and between Aristotle's view of rhetoric and CEDA debate. (Interestingly, Plato preceded Aristotle, and NDT debate preceded CEDA debate.) The differences between NDT and CEDA are not only philosophical; it appears that the cause for the division of the intercollegiate debate community is deeper than a preference to discuss either values or policies (the stock explanation). Like Plato, NDT debate treats rhetoric like a tool of philosophers, psychologists, and logicians. CEDA, like Aristotle, treats rhetoric like a tool of democracy and therefore believes it should fall within the realm of common knowledge. The distinction is important. NDT demands that the audience adjust to the speaker, whereas CEDA demands that the speaker adjust to the audience.

In this essay, we have presented and reviewed recent theoretical and empirical writings concerning the differences between NDT and CEDA de-



bate. We have suggested that the two segments have modeled their respective activities in reasoning similar to that of the two most influential rhetoricians in history. If the merits of either activity are to be debated, their theoretical roots should be considered as a foundation. Theoretical frameworks can provide the NDT and CEDA debate community with a sound philosophical basis for these activities.

As Thomas warns:

If forensics events are to become more than a club activity, then clear and defensible educational purposes for them must be established and maintained. Any cocurricular activity without perceived educational rationale is forever at risk for the continuation of departmental or institutional support (14).

As educators, it is our responsibility to identify and evolve theory. Littlejohn observed that "The term communication theory usually refers to the body of theories that makes up our understanding of the communication process. . . . The field of communication is so young that it has not produced much theory, so our knowledge of communication still relies on an eclectic approach. This situation is changing, however, and we will see more direct theorizing about communication" (3-5). We contend that intercollegiate debate has evolved with little theoretical foundation into two organizations with different philosophies. These philosophies appear to resemble the classical rhetorical theories of Plato and Aristotle, whether the likenesses are intentional or not. By identifying underlying philosophies, forensics educators can develop theoretical perspectives and intelligently justify their approaches.

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